

CPVV ESAB52FJC554

NO RUMMR

DE RUSSLK 47375 2761140

INZ SSSSS ZZK (ZDK)

CR 131117Z OCT 79

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5879

INFO RUHJPC/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2789

RUSBO/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 9399

RUHRA/AMEMBASSY JDDA 2408

RUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1841

RUEHC/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1862

RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7484

RUFHNA/USMISSION USNATC 1273

RUHMR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 2535

RUHCHIA/CINCPAC

RUSNAAA/CINCEUR

BT

S E C R E T KABUL 7319

EXDIS

NOFORN

MILITARY ADDRESSEES PLEASE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

CINCPAC AND CINCEUR ALSO FOR POLAD

U.S. 12065: GDS 12/3/85 (FLATIN, BRUCE A.) OK-M

TACT: PEP, PINS, MILI, MOPS, AF, UR

OBJ: (S) SOVIET COMBAT TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. DEFINITION OF SOVIET COMBAT PERSONNEL: WHEN EMBASSY KABUL USES THE TERM "COMBAT TROOPS" TO REFER TO SOVIET MILITARY PERSONNEL IN AFGHANISTAN, IT INCLUDES: (A) CLEARLY DISTINCT SOVIET MILITARY UNITS, SUCH AS THE SOVIETS' SPECIAL 600-MAN "REACTION FORCE" WHICH APPEARS TO BE PROVIDING THE INTERIOR DEFENCE CURRENTLY FOR BAGRAM AIR BASE; (B) SOVIET COMBAT SPECIALISTS, SUCH AS THE SOME 500 TO 1,000 SOVIET ARMORED-CORPS SOLDIERS CURRENTLY STATIONED AT THE PUL-I-CHAPKI TANK BASE; (C) THE SEVERAL INDIVIDUAL YOUNG SOVIET SOLDIERS BEING SIGHTED AROUND KABUL, WHO ARE BELIEVED TO PERFORM, INTER ALIA, SPECIAL SENTRY ROLES FOR SOVIET INSTALLATIONS AND HOUSING AREAS (MANY HAVE CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE SLAVIC FEATURES, AND THEIR AFGHAN UNIFORMS ARE CONSPICUOUSLY HEAVIER THAN THOSE OF REGULAR AFGHAN SOLDIERS); (D) ANY SOVIET MILITARY MAN HERE WHOSE OPERATIONAL ROLE APPEARS TO BE MORE THAN THAT OF A TRAINING ADVISOR, SUCH AS THE SOVIET TECHNICIANS WHO SERVICE THE HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS AND ARMORED VEHICLES NOW BEING USED HERE IN ACTION AGAINST THE REBELS.

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3. NUMBER OF SOVIET COMBAT PERSONNEL: ACCORDING TO THE BEST INFORMATION CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO US, INCLUDING DATA CONFIRMED BY OTHER SENSITIVE USG SOURCES, THERE ARE PROBABLY 4,200 SOVIET COMBAT PERSONNEL IN AFGHANISTAN AT THIS TIME. THIS FIGURE CAN BE REGARDED AS CONSERVATIVE. AS NOTED ABOVE, THERE ARE AT LEAST 500 SOVIET TROOPS GUARDING BAGRAM AIR BASE. THE ACTUAL NUMBER COULD BE HIGHER. THE OTHER CATEGORIES DISCUSSED IN THE PRECEDING PARAGRAPH TOTAL 3,620, AT THE VERY LEAST. IT IS HARD TO BE PRECISE IN CERTAIN CASES. HENCE THE 500-TO-1,700 FIGURE WE ARE CITING FOR SOVIET ARMORED CORPS PERSONNEL AT THE PUL-I-CHARNI TANK BASE. AS THESE FIGURES ARE REPEATED AND VERIFIED, THE TOTAL COULD GO HIGHER. FOR FURTHER DETAILS, PLEASE CHECK NKK-4308 OF SEPTEMBER 8, NKK-4747 OF SEPTEMBER 22, AND NKK-4750 OF SEPTEMBER 27, 1979.

4. DEFINITION OF SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORY PERSONNEL: WE USE THE TERM "SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS" TO DESCRIBE ONLY THOSE PERSONS WHOSE PRIMARY ROLE APPEARS TO BE TO TRAIN THE AFGHAN FORCES AND PROVIDE TECHNICAL ADVICE. BECAUSE SO MANY SOVIET "ADVISORS" ASSIGNED TO AFGHAN COMBAT UNITS ARE ASSUMING DIRECT OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONS DURING COMBAT WITH REBEL FORCES, HOWEVER -- INCLUDING, IN SEVERAL CASES, DIRECT COMMAND AND COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBS

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AND "COMBAT FORCES" CATEGORIES. SOME OF THESE SOVIET OFFICERS SHIFT BACK TO ADVISORY ROLES DURING PERIODS WHEN THEIR REGIONS BECOME STABILIZED; OTHERS RETAIN COMMAND AUTHORITY. AT LEAST THREE OF THE SOVIET COMMANDERS IN THE FIELD ARE OF GENERAL RANK, INCIDENTALLY.

5. NUMBER OF MILITARY ADVISORS: WE ESTIMATE THAT THERE ARE SOME 3,000 SOVIETS ASSIGNED HERE AS MILITARY ADVISORS, BUT, FOR THE REASONS DISCUSSED ABOVE, SOME PORTION OF THIS TOTAL PROBABLY SHOULD BE SHIFTED TO THE "COMBAT TROOPS" SIDE OF THE LEDGER AT TIMES. WE UNFORTUNATELY LACK PRECISE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PARTICULAR CATEGORY AT THIS TIME. IT IS EASIER TO SPOT AND EVALUATE LARGE BLOCKS OF SOVIET TROOPS AT BAGRAM AND PUL-I-CHARNI THAN IT IS TO VEICH THE VARIOUS ROLES OF INDIVIDUAL SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS IN AFGHAN UNITS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.

6. TOTAL SOVIET MILITARY PERSONNEL IN AFGHANISTAN: THE 4,200 CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE COMBAT TROOPS, TAKEN TOGETHER WITH SOME 3,000 MEN WHOSE PRIMARY ROLE SEEMS AT THIS TIME TO BE IN THE TRAINING AND ADVISORY LEVEL GIVES A TOTAL OF 7,200 SOVIET UNIFORMED PERSONNEL IN THIS COUNTRY. MOST OF THEM, OF COURSE, COULD BE REGARDED AS "COMBAT TROOPS" IN A CRUNCH SITUATION REQUIRING A QUICK SOVIET REACTION. AS NOTED ABOVE, WE BELIEVE THAT OUR FIGURES ARE ON THE CONSERVATIVE SIDE; THEREFORE, WE BELIEVE THEM TO CONTAIN NO SERIOUS EVALUATION. ADDS SOME POSTS WILL BE REFORCED OR TAKEN WHEN THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE STATISTICS. INTENTZ